

VZCZCXRO2054
RR RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHJS #0076 2390337
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 270337Z AUG 09
FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0447
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0436
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0005
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0207
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0010
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0172
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHHMHAA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
RHOVVKG/COMSEVENTHFLT
RUEHJS/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 0458

UNCLAS SURABAYA 000076

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/PD, EAP/MTS
JAKARTA FOR DAO, PAS, AND POL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [MARR](#) [PHSA](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: INDONESIAN FLEET REVIEW: U.S. NAVY DOMINATES THE SHOW AND
THE MEDIA COVERAGE

¶1. (U) Summary: The U.S. Navy, led by the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, dominated "Sail Bunaken" at the Indonesian Fleet Review (IFR) 2009, hosted by Indonesia in North Sulawesi August 12-20, 2009. Indonesian officials, the media, and the general public expressed overwhelming appreciation for the participation of Admiral Gary Roughead, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and five U.S. warships. Indonesian officials welcomed the clear demonstration of the U.S. Navy's commitment to strengthening relations and cooperation with its Indonesian counterparts. Media coverage was extensive and universally positive. End Summary.

U.S. NAVY'S OBVIOUS COMMITMENT

¶2. (U) Indonesia welcomed the world's navies to North Sulawesi for IFR 2009, "Sail Bunaken". Thirty five warships from 15 nations participated in the final parade of ships and aircraft, led by the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON. An additional 19 countries sent delegations, with 15 Chiefs of Navy or their representatives participating. China sent one warship and Rear Admiral Su Zhiqian, Commander of the South Sea Fleet, who represented the Chief of Navy; Australia sent one warship, an oiler, a survey vessel, a customs ship, and its Chief of Navy; Japan sent three destroyers; and India sent two warships and Vice Admiral Nirmal Verma, Flag Officer Commander-in-Chief, as the representative of the Chief of Navy. U.S. CNO Admiral Gary Roughead, speaking on behalf of the assembled Naval chiefs, praised Indonesia's initiative in hosting the event as an opportunity to bring the navies of the world together to discuss shared security and prosperity.

¶3. (U) The size and dominance of the U.S. Navy's participation in Sail Bunaken did not go unnoticed by any of the participants or the media. Indonesian officials in particular welcomed this clear demonstration of the U.S. Navy's interest in strengthening cooperation with Indonesia. As the GEORGE WASHINGTON steamed in front of the reviewing stand, the Indonesian delegation, led by the Coordinating Minister for Defense and Security, saluted the carrier and its crew. As four planes launched from its deck, the estimated tens of thousands of spectators lining the shore broke into a sustained standing ovation. After the GEORGE WASHINGTON and three additional U.S. warships had passed in single file, the remaining ships steamed past in parallel lines. The USS MCCAMPBELL concluded the warship parade.

A POSITIVE NEWS STORY

¶4. (U) The GEORGE WASHINGTON, its aircraft, and its four support ships dominated media coverage of "Sail Bunaken." The U.S. Navy organized a VIP flight, which included six members of the press, out to the GEORGE WASHINGTON. Similarly, the Navy invited the press to tour the USS MCCAMPBELL when it was docked in Bitung. Both ship visits generated overwhelmingly positive press reports, with the trip to the aircraft carrier garnering headlines such as "Spectacular Attraction!", "Wow, How Huge," and USS GEORGE WASHINGTON Amazed Manado."

¶5. (U) Media coverage of "Sail Bunaken" focused almost exclusively on the U.S. Navy in general and the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON in particular. MetroTV, for example, broadcast a report from the deck of the GEORGE WASHINGTON on the weekend following the event, while papers throughout Indonesia carried special first-hand accounts of their reporters' "dream come true opportunity" visit to the carrier. The U.S. Navy's willingness to invite the media on board their ships and offer members of their crews for interviews paid huge dividends in positive media coverage and goodwill. The only complaint came from business owners disappointed that the vast majority of ships did not allow their sailors to disembark, and those that did stayed in Bitung rather than travelling to the provincial capital Manado, thus limiting the anticipated economic windfall.

MCCLELLAND